

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATING COLUMBUS,  
OHIO, ON WINNING THE SMART  
CITY CHALLENGE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I would be remiss if I didn't first say that I am pleased to see in the Presiding Officer's chair a fellow Eagle Scout from Wyoming who is as good to the Scouts as a middle-aged man—close enough—as the Scouts were to him as a young man. So it is an honor to speak on the floor with Senator ENZI being in the Presiding Officer's chair.

This has been a great week for my State, the State of Ohio. Yesterday, I was on this floor joining my colleague from Cincinnati to speak about the Cleveland Cavaliers' historic NBA championship victory. Cleveland had not had a winning sports team—winning meaning a championship team—since I was 12 years old, when Jim Brown ran for the Cleveland Browns. In those days, we expected the Cleveland Indians to win every year. They never did. The Cavaliers didn't even exist in 1964. So this was a particularly exciting week for the Cleveland Cavaliers and for my city of Cleveland.

My wife joined literally a million people on the streets of downtown Cleveland to celebrate yesterday. This is in a county of 1.2 million. So either everybody who lives in the county was there or people from all over Northeast Ohio came to join them.

The second great thing for my State this week is that this afternoon Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx is in the capital, Columbus—one of our other major cities and the largest city in the State—in the Linden neighborhood, on the sort of east-northeast side of town, to announce our city as winner of the Smart City Challenge. Secretary Foxx created this competition to define what it means to be a “smart city” in the 21st century. It was a challenge for our cities to integrate new technologies—from self-driving vehicles to electric vehicles, to smart sensors—into this transportation network.

Just as importantly, Secretary Foxx challenged applicants to think beyond adopting new technology for its own sake. Applicants were encouraged to offer a vision for how that new technology can make a difference for all Americans—from connecting low-income neighborhoods to jobs and opportunity to reducing congestion; to making streets safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, and children to get, certainly, to work, but to get to the doctor or the grocery store; to all things that a modern big-city transportation system could be.

Earlier this year, 78 cities from across the Nation submitted applications. In March, the Department selected from those 78 just 7 finalists to

compete for today's award. The competition was tough. Cities such as Portland, OR, Denver, Kansas City, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and Austin were all finalists, joining the city of Columbus. Columbus' win was all the more impressive as a result.

Our city would not have won without, first of all, Mayor Andy Ginther's leadership. The mayor didn't do this alone, although he played such a prominent role. The Central Ohio community united to develop innovative solutions to our city's challenges, and that made all the difference in the world.

So \$40 million in grant funding from DOT will be matched by an additional \$10 million from Vulcan, Inc., and \$90 million of matching funds will come from the community of Columbus. This investment will allow the city to deploy some very impressive technology. Columbus will expand the use of electric vehicles. It will be testing a range of sensors, connected vehicles, and smartphone applications.

At Easton, a major commercial hub, a small fleet of driverless vehicles will link the Easton Transit Center with nearby employers. This will expand horizons for bus riders from lower income neighborhoods, such as Linden, who will be able to more easily travel to jobs not near the busline or the transit center.

I am particularly excited that Columbus will focus on the way the transportation systems affect the city's health. In some neighborhoods, the infant mortality rate is four times the national average. My State, shamefully, is 47th in the Nation in infant mortality and 50th in the Nation in Black infant mortality. It is shameful, and it is for a lot of reasons, one of which is that we have a State government that has never really invested in public health in the way they should.

We can't think about problems like this in a vacuum. It isn't just a health care problem. It is a public works problem, and that includes transportation. The “Smart Columbus” plan will measure missed prenatal and pediatric visits so we can align our transportation system with the goal of reducing infant mortality by 40 percent and cutting in half the racial health disparity.

I would add that Mayor Ginther, as council president prior to his job as mayor this year, led the charge city-wide on reducing infant mortality. The Greater Columbus Infant Mortality Task Force's Celebrate One Program has made impressive progress in building a coalition and setting aggressive goals to tackle this issue. These new transit options will build on this work.

This is what becoming a smart city should be about—expanding how we think about infrastructure and public works, harnessing technology to ensure a transportation system that benefits everyone, making it a truly public work.

Today's award wouldn't have happened without a very long list of re-

gional partners. I can't name them all, but the Ohio State University, the Columbus Partnership, Columbus 2020, Battelle, Nationwide, Honda, American Electric Power, and many, many more came together to build the application, and they will be working side by side with the city to roll out this vision.

I want to thank Secretary Foxx and Administrator Flowers, with whom I spent part of an afternoon just a couple of weeks ago in Columbus as she was announcing something else we were doing along the CMAX corridor, along the east-northeast Cleveland Avenue part of Columbus.

Our Nation's transportation system is undergoing radical transformation. A decade from now, my children, who live in Columbus, and my grandchildren, who live in Columbus, will travel in different ways than we do today. The Secretary's vision for this program was bold, and I am so excited for cities—for Columbus, specifically, but I also know that other cities will see what the smart city of Columbus has done with this grant, with this new technology in transportation, and they will work with Columbus, mimic Columbus, and turn it into a success for our whole Nation.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, nothing is more fundamental for a democracy than the right to vote. Last year, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, one of the most important pieces of legislation we passed in the 20th century. It opened the door to millions—literally millions—of Americans to exercise their constitutional right.

This year will mark the first Presidential election in half a century without the full protections guaranteed by the Voting Rights Act. Three years ago this week, the Supreme Court gutted a key part of the law, taking the teeth out of provisions that protect voters from suppression laws, with its decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*.

Since that misguided decision, States across the country have passed new voting restrictions that would disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of Americans. Unfortunately, Ohio is ground zero in these efforts to restrict voting rights. These laws, passed by an ultraconservative State legislature in Columbus, include cutting early voting and eliminating Golden Week—created by a more moderate Republican legislature of a decade earlier—when voters can register and vote on the same day. In other words, early voting starts a week before registration closes, so during that week a new voter can register and vote in the same trip to the board of elections.

This May, a Federal court did the right thing and struck down that law and reinstated Golden Week and early voting—proving once again that these State legislators went too far. Judge Watson, a George Bush appointee in